



THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF 76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

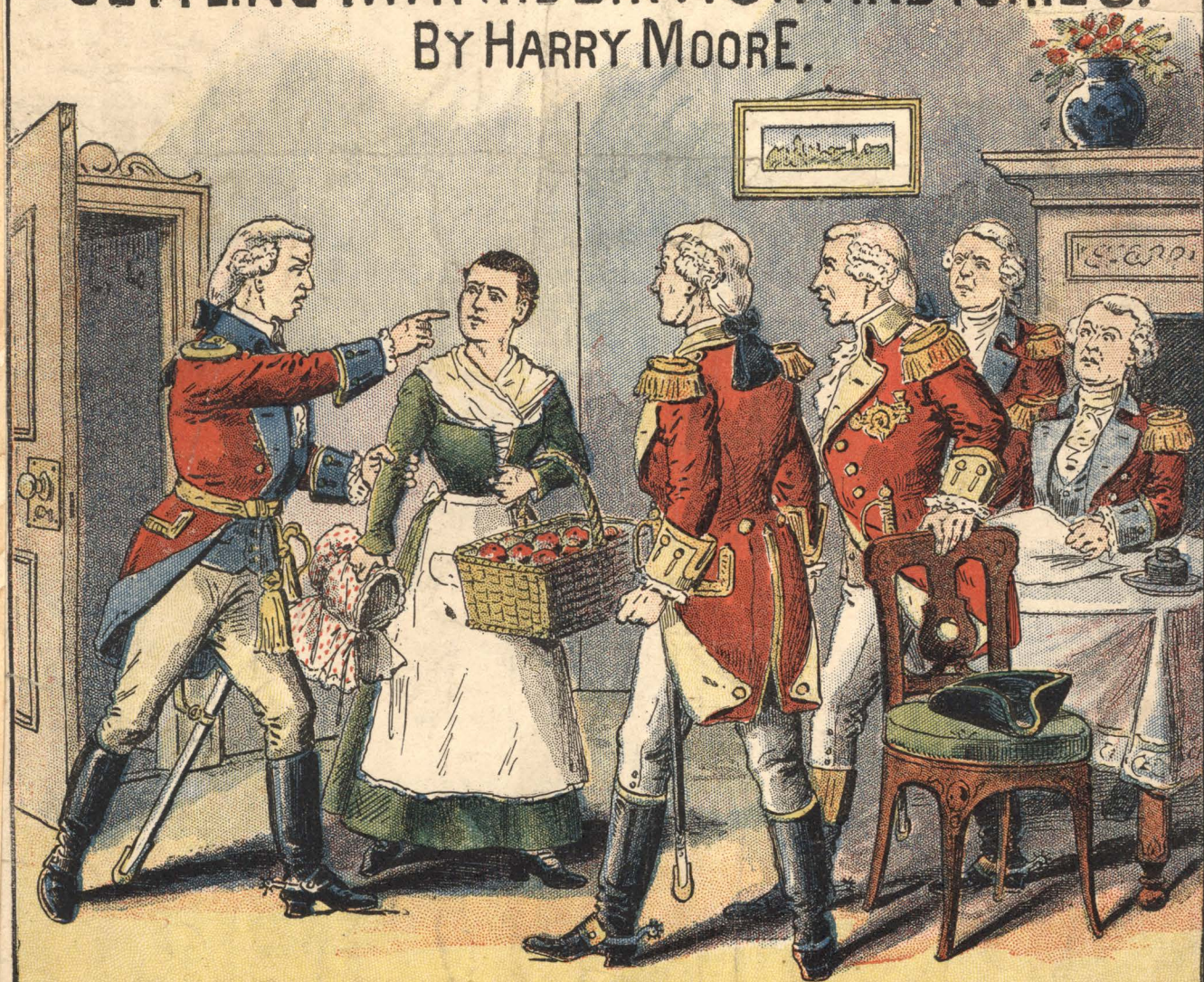
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THE LIBERTY BOYS' OATH; OR SETTLING WITH THE BRITISH AND TORIES. BY HARRY MOORE.



Captain Frink said: "This is not a woman at all, but that infernal patriot boy spy who calls himself 'Sam Sly.' Seize him! Don't let him escape!" And the worthy captain seized Dick by the arm. Dick was menaced by a terrible danger.

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NEW YORK, January 11, 1901.

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CHAPTER I.

A DANGEROUS ASSIGNMENT.

September, 1776.

The British have just succeeded in driving the Continental Army off Long Island.

In the battle of Long Island, which took place August 27, the outposts of the Continental Army had been attacked and routed, and had been forced to retire to Brooklyn Heights.

General Washington, knowing his army could not withstand a siege, had withdrawn his army from Brooklyn Heights in a night, from almost under the very noses of the British, and had crossed over to New York.

And now, at this writing, the main army occupied Harlem Heights, along the Harlem River, leaving a detachment consisting of four thousand men down in the city, under the command of General Putnam.

General Washington sat in his headquarters alone. He was thinking deeply.

The great man realized that a great responsibility rested on his shoulders.

He was commander-in-chief of the Continental armies. He made a mistake the consequences would be severe.

The error of judgment might mean defeat of the great cause of Liberty.

Therefore, it was necessary to study the situation keenly before making a step.

While the commander-in-chief sat there pondering, one of the staff officers entered.

"Well, your excellency," he said, after greeting his commander-in-chief, "what do you think of the situation?"

"I do not like it," was the reply.

"Do you think we can hold New York?"

"Oh, no; New York will have to be abandoned, but we can hold it until forced to withdraw."

"Then where will we go?"

"Back into the country."

"But supposing the British were to come around and attack us from the rear, as they did Sullivan and Stirling, on Long Island, what could we do?"

"We must not allow this to happen," said Washington, quietly.

"But how will you help it? How will you know when they are starting to make a move of that kind?"

"I shall have to make use of spies."

"Ah! I see; but what spy would dare venture across to the British stronghold to obtain information? It would be sure death!"

"It would be very dangerous, but not necessarily sure death. I have several spies who would go at once, if I gave them the order. For instance, there is Bird, and then, again, there is Harper; and then I have a boy spy who did wonderful work a couple of weeks ago, among the British, before the attack was made on Sullivan and Stirling."

"I heard about that. What is the boy's name?"

"Dick Slater."

"Ah, yes; I remember it now. He rescued some of our men who were held prisoners, did he not?"

"Yes; a dozen. Bird and Harper were among them."

"That was quite a feat for a boy to perform."

"Yes; or a man, either. He succeeded where Bird and Harper, two of the best spies I have, failed, and were captured. So I think he is the person for me to send over to spy among the British across the East River."

"Do you think he will be bold enough to venture?"

"I think so; indeed, I am confident he will be delighted at being selected for the dangerous and important work."

"He must be an extraordinary youth, then."

"He is, I am sure. I think he will make his mark before this war is ended."

The commander-in-chief called an orderly.

"Orderly," he said, "in my army is a company of youths who call themselves 'The Liberty Boys of '76.' Their commander is a youth named Dick Slater. I wish you to have this young man sent to me here at once."

The orderly saluted and withdrew.

Half an hour elapsed.

During that time the commander-in-chief and his staff officers—others having entered the headquarters meanwhile—discussed the situation pro and con.

Like the great general that he was, Washington asked the views of his staff officers, listened to what they had to say, and if anything was advanced that he thought good, he made use of it.

Then the orderly entered and announced:

"Dick Slater, your excellency."

"Show him in," said the commander-in-chief.

The orderly saluted and withdrew.

The next moment a handsome youth of about eighteen years entered the room.

There was something about the looks of this youth to attract attention anywhere.

He was well built and athletic looking.

Then, too, he had a finely shaped head, on a pair of magnificent shoulders, and the clear, cool eyes indicated perfect self-control, and his whole appearance showed that he was a youth possessed of a cool courage and splendid judgment.

In a word, he had a masterful look, such as is more often seen in a man after many years of experience in fighting life's battles in which he had been victor.

"Master Slater," said the commander-in-chief, after greeting the youth, "a couple of weeks ago you went over onto Long Island, penetrated into the midst of the British forces, and after gaining considerable information, you rescued some patriot soldiers who had been captured and imprisoned, and escaped to the American lines."

Dick bowed.

He was a modest youth, and felt that there was nothing to be said.

"You did splendidly on that occasion," the commander-in-chief continued; "and it is on that account that I have decided to give you the opportunity of going upon another undertaking."

"You have but to order, and I shall obey," said Dick, promptly.

"Spoken like a man and a patriot! Then you are willing to be detailed upon work of a character which leads you into great danger?"

"I am not only willing, but glad to be detailed for such work, your excellency. I hate the British and Tories, and there is no risk I would not take, there is nothing I would not dare, if as a result I am of service to the great Cause. I have personal feeling in this matter, your excellency. The Tories murdered my father, and I have taken an oath to never rest until after I have settled with the British and

Tories in full for the murder of my father. And my Liberty Boys—the company which I command, your excellency—have taken an oath to stand by me to the bitter end and fight to the death to aid me in squaring my account against the British and Tories."

"You are a brave and noble youth! Well, I shall make use of your services, Master Dick, and I am confident that you will be better able to do the work I wish done than anyone else whom I could select."

"Thank you, sir. What is it that you wish me to do?"

"I wish you to do some more spy work."

"I am ready to do it, sir."

"Very good; I wish to have information of the intended movements of the British, if such a thing is possible. If they decide to try to flank us and reach our rear, I wish to know of the intended movement; in fact, I wish to have advance information of the intended movements of the British, if possible. Do you think you can secure the information for me?"

The commander-in-chief looked at Dick searchingly.

"I will try, sire, and will do my best."

Dick spoke simply, but there was a firm, determined ring to his voice that impressed the general and the members of his staff.

"Well, that is all that can be asked—that you try and do your best. You must remember, my boy, that as you were in the lines of the British, and pretended to wish to join the king's army, you will be recognized if you are seen by any of those who saw you before."

"I know that, your excellency; but I am willing to go once and begin my work."

"Good! You may cross the river to-night, then, and enter upon the difficult and dangerous undertaking."

Then the commander-in-chief gave Dick the necessary instructions, after which the youth took his departure, the general and members of the staff shaking hands with him and wishing him good luck and Godspeed.

"There goes a brave, noble and shrewd youth," said the commander-in-chief, when Dick had gone. "I feel that he will, if he escapes death at the hands of the British, be of inestimable service to the Cause of Liberty in the present great struggle."

"He is a handsome, manly-looking young fellow, certainly," coincided one of the staff officers, and the others nodded assent.

"Somehow, I place great confidence in that youth's ability to secure information, and keep me posted as to the intended movements of the British," the commander-in-chief said.

As for Dick, he left the headquarters feeling highly elated.

His heart swelled with pride that the commander-in-chief should select him, in preference to one of the men spies, to go upon such an important undertaking as that of securing information of the intentions of the British with regard to the capture of the city of New York and of the patriot army.

"I will do my best," he said to himself. "I have taken an oath to settle with the British and Tories, and I will do everything I can to make their defeat a certainty."

He returned to where his company of Liberty Boys was quartered.

"What did the commander-in-chief want with you, Dick?" asked Bob Estabrook, a handsome youth of Dick's age.

"He wants me to go over across the river and spy upon the British, Bob."

"Phew! some more spy work, eh?" exclaimed Bob, eagerly.

"Yes."

"Say, I wish General Washington would give me some of that kind of work to do."

Bob's eyes shone eagerly.

"Perhaps he will do so, Bob."

"If he needs the services of any more spies than he has will you recommend me, Dick?"

"Of course I will, Bob."

"Good for you!"

After some further talk, Bob said:

"I got a letter from the folks a little while ago, Dick."

Dick started, and he looked at Bob eagerly.

"I hope they are all well," he said.

"Especially Alice, eh?" with a chuckle.

Alice was Bob's sister, and Dick's sweetheart.

Dick flushed slightly, and then nodded.

"Right," he said, with a smile.

"They're all well, Dick, and——"

"And my mother and sister!—did they say how they are? I have received but one letter from them since we left home to join the army."

"That is just what I was going to tell you. They are all, also."

"I am glad to hear that."

"They send their love to us, old fellow!"

The youths lived near Tarrytown, where their homes had been since they could remember, and the old homes were very dear to them; but they were not homesick. They were

too eager to be in the army and help fight for liberty to get homesick.

"Oh, by the way," said Bob, with a sly grin, "here is an inclosure that came in my letter. It is addressed to you, you see. It looks wonderfully like the handwriting of my sister Alice, though, of course, it must be from your sister Edith!"

"That's all right!" laughed Dick, as he seized the note eagerly, and gave Bob a cuff alongside the head; "I'll wager a good deal that there was an inclosure for you in my sister Edith's handwriting!"

Bob chuckled.

"You're a pretty good guesser!" he said.

Dick read the note from Alice Estabrook, his sweetheart.

It was filled to overflowing with expressions of love, and there were, also, congratulations on the wonderful work he had performed as a spy, in penetrating within the British lines and rescuing some patriot prisoners, the news of this exploit having reached the folks at home.

Dick's eyes shone with pleasure as he read, and when he had finished he kissed the note, and placed it carefully in his pocket.

"Just what I did with Edith's!" chuckled Bob, and Dick blushed, and then laughed.

They talked of the folks at home for a while, and then their conversation turned to the dangerous work which Dick was to undertake with the coming darkness.

"How are you going to do, Dick?" asked Bob. "Aren't you afraid you will be recognized? There are those two captains, Parks and Frink, who will recognize you, and then there are a number of the soldiers who will do so, if they lay eyes on you."

"I'll tell you what I think I shall do, Bob," said Dick; "a bold game is more likely to succeed than any other kind, and I believe I will not wait till night to go across the river, but will go across right away."

"In broad daylight!"

Bob was astounded.

"You will be killed, sure, Dick!" he added.

"No; I shall go in disguise."

"Oh! What kind of a disguise will you adopt, Dick?"

"I haven't decided as yet. I will visit a second-hand store down in the city, and decide on a disguise then."

"And you're going right away?"

"At once, Bob!"

Twenty minutes later Dick left the quarters dressed in his civilian suit, having bade good-by to Bob and the rest of the Liberty Boys, and started down toward the city.

CHAPTER II.

THE APPLE WOMAN.

Reaching the business portion of the city, Dick entered a second-hand store.

The dealer hastened forward to wait on him.

He was a Jew, and alive to the chance to make an honest, or otherwise, dollar.

"I'll tell you what I want," said Dick; "I wish a costume that will be a disguise, so that no one who knows me would recognize me."

"Ah! I see, mine poy. Vell, I haf many kints uv gossdumes which will suit you, I am sure."

Then he got down several suits of clothes, and a lot of wigs, etc.

Dick feared that the wigs and other articles of disguise would not pass muster in the daytime, and a bright thought struck him:

Why not dress up in women's clothing?

Dick asked to be shown a dress that would fit him, and the dealer got two or three down off the shelves.

Dick selected one.

"May I put it on here?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, mine poy!" the Jew assured him, deciding to charge a dollar extra for this.

So Dick retired to a little room at the rear of the store, and put the dress on over his clothing.

When he came forth, arrayed in the dress, the dealer held up his hands in amazement and admiration.

"You vos bretty enough vor anyvun to make luf do!" he exclaimed. "Der disgwize vos perfect! Only you must haf a hat to go with der dress."

"I prefer a bonnet," said Dick; "then my lack of hair will not be so noticeable."

"Here ish a ponnet," the dealer said, and he brought out an old sunbonnet with a flourish.

Dick put it on.

Then he went to the mirror at the end of the room and took a look at himself.

He could hardly keep from laughing aloud.

He looked ludicrous—at least that was the way it seemed to him.

Still, he said to himself, with a feeling of satisfaction, it would be impossible for anyone to recognize him in this kind of a rig.

"My own mother wouldn't know me," he thought. "I guess this will do nicely."

He asked the price of the dress and bonnet, and the Jew named a sum twice what the articles were worth.

Dick did not demur, however.

He paid the sum without a word.

It was just the disguise he wished, and he did not feel like quarreling over the price, when he was getting something which might save his life, and make it possible for him to be successful in the undertaking on which he was about to start.

Leaving the Jew's store, he walked down the street in many ways to an apple stand.

Here he purchased a basketful of apples.

Then he headed for the East River front.

He reached the river at the point where Washington's army had come across, on the night it escaped from Brooklyn Heights.

Dick looked around for a while, and presently found a boy sitting in a boat fishing.

He approached the boy, and engaged him in conversation.

"Catching many fish?" he asked.

"Not many," was the reply.

Dick pointed to the apples in the basket.

"Would ye like to hev a couple uv nice, red apples?" he asked, simulating the voice of the typical apple woman.

"Wouldn't mind if I had a couple uv 'em, aunty," was the reply.

"Well, I am a poor woman, an' I wants to git over the British ter sell my apples, an' if ye will row me across I'll g'in ye a couple uv nice ones."

"Done! Clim' in, aunty," said the boy.

Dick entered the boat promptly, and the boy cast loose the painter, and taking up the oars, rowed out into the river.

"Hain't ye afraid ter go over amongst the British, aunty?" the boy asked, looking at Dick curiously.

"Laws bless ye, no!" replied Dick; "they won't hurt a lone woman like me!"

"I'd be afraid they'd take the apples an' not pay for 'em," the boy said.

"I'd slap the face off the man as'd try ter rob me in that fashion!"

"Good fur you!" the boy said; "they'd hang ye, though ef ye hit one of 'em."

"I'm no afeered, my boy."

They soon reached the Long Island shore, and Dick stepped out of the boat, and gave the boy a couple of the nicest apples at the same time thanking him.

"Thet's all right, aunty," the boy said; "good-by, an' look out that some uv them British officers don't make love to ye."

"I'll slap 'em in the mouth, ef they try et!" Dick said, and the boy laughed, and started back toward the New York side.

Dick made his way straight to Brooklyn Heights.

He felt that a bold course was the only one to pursue.

The British soldiers were attracted by the sight of the apples at once, and crowded around Dick.

"How much for the apples, my good woman?" asked a sergeant.

Dick named a price, which was the same price that the apple dealer over in New York charged at retail.

"Give me a couple; that is cheap enough!"

"It's too cheap. How can you afford it, my good woman?" from another, who also took a couple of the apples.

"I'll tell you, fellows," said another; "she is looking for a husband, and is willing to sell her apples without profit, if she succeeds in getting a man."

"I wouldn't get one if I got you!" retorted Dick, promptly, and this answer amused the rest immensely.

They laughed at their companion, and guyed him till he was red in the face, and mad enough to fight.

"You think you are smart, don't you, you hussy!" he hissed, glaring at Dick.

"Too smart for you!" replied Dick, coolly.

"See here, you she-rebel!" the fellow cried, almost beside himself with anger. "I have a good mind to slap your saucy mouth!"

"Try it, if ye dare, ye big, red-coated coward, ye!" cried Dick. "Jest try et, an' although I'm but a woman, I'll give ye a thrashing, as sure as me name is Molly Potter!"

The other soldiers cheered the supposed woman to the echo, and gave the fellow the laugh worse than ever.

He was one of those hot-headed, brutal men who have no regard or respect for women, and with a muttered curse he strode forward, and aimed a slap with the open hand at Dick's cheek.

The youth was on his guard, however.

He did not intend to let any British soldier slap his face, if he could help it.

Quick as a flash, he brushed the fellow's arm aside.

Then out shot his own good right arm. Crack! his fist took the redcoat fairly between the eyes, and down the fellow went with a crash!

The spectators stared at the supposed woman for a few moments in silent wonder.

Then they uttered exclamations of amazement.

"Great guns! What a blow!"

"It was like the kick of a mule!"

"The woman can hit equal to any man!"

"I guess Larkins thinks so!"

Larkins was the name of the soldier who had been knocked down.

He was, naturally, the most amazed man of all.

The thought that he could be floored by a woman—knocked down as he had been—had never entered the fellow's mind.

He had supposed that, as a man, he could slap the face of the supposed woman with perfect safety.

He had discovered his mistake, however.

The blow which had been dealt him had been a strong one.

The fellow had seen more stars then than he had in a week.

He was a brutal fellow, however, and he scrambled to his feet as quickly as he could.

He was intent on obtaining revenge.

No thought that the person who had struck him was a woman, and that as such she should be safe from attack, came to him.

It did not make a particle of difference to this brute in human form.

He would strike the woman as quickly as he would a man—and perhaps more quickly, as he was a coward at heart.

True, he had been knocked down by the woman, but he thought this simply an accident, and that the woman could not hit him again.

"Out of my way!" he almost shouted to some of his comrades, who got in his way and sought to hold him back.

"Out of my way! That cursed old apple woman struck me, and I am going to pay her back for it! Nobody shall strike Sam Larkins and get away scot free, even if that somebody does wear a petticoat!"

"Shame!" some of the soldiers cried at this, and they hissed Larkins.

But this only made him more angry, and he hurled two or three of his comrades aside, and tried to reach the apple woman.

Dick had sized the fellow up pretty closely.

The redcoat was one of those cowardly bullies who tyrannize over those weaker than themselves, and terrorize those of mild temperaments, and the youth made up his mind to teach the fellow a lesson.

"Don't hold him back!" he cried, in his disguised voice, which was a very good imitation of the voice of a woman;

"don't hold the coward back! Let him come on, an' I'll show ye that a woman can thrash him! He is a brute, but is not dangerous!"

"Yes, he is dangerous!" said the soldier to Dick, in a low tone; "he has no sense, and would handle you roughly if he was let get at you."

"I'm not afraid of him, or of any man!" said Dick, defiantly. "All I ask is for some one to hold my basket of apples. Then let him come on, and I will show ye all that a woman can whip him!"

"By jove! I believe she can do it!" said one soldier, admiringly.

"I'll hold your apples; you are liable to drop the basket, anyway," from another, and he took the basket.

"Now turn him loose!" said Dick; "let him go, if you don't like him!"

The soldiers did not wish to let the fellow go, but he, by a sudden effort, burst away from them, and leaped toward Dick with the ferocity of a maddened tiger.

"I'll hit you once, anyway, you she-fiend!" he snarled, and he struck at the youth with all his might.

Of course, he never for one moment thought that he would miss the mark he aimed at.

But he did.

He was not dealing with a helpless woman, but with a strong, athletic, lion-hearted youth.

Of course, Dick was handicapped to some extent by the dress-skirts—or would have been had he been forced to move about to any great extent—but this handicap was more apparent than real, and it was counterbalanced by the fact that the assailant thought the youth was a woman, and was careless, thinking he could easily strike a woman down.

Just as the blow was almost ready to land, the youth made a quick side step, and dodged the merest trifle—just sufficient to allow the man's fist to go over his shoulder.

Then, quick as a flash, he struck out, his fist catching the redcoat on the jaw with terrible force, and down the fellow went with a thump!

And this time he lay still.

He did not move, and it was at once apparent that the fellow had been knocked senseless by the blow.

This was such a wonderful feat that all stood and stared down at the stunned redcoat for a few moments in paralyzed silence.

Then wondering exclamations escaped the lips of all.

That a woman could deliver such a blow was almost beyond belief.

The soldiers stared at Dick in wonder.

"How did you do it?" presently one of the redcoats asked.

"With my fist!" replied Dick, promptly; "and I can knock out any man as tries ter mistreat me, so everybody take warnin'. I kin take keer uv meself!"

"I guess you can!" was the admiring rejoinder.

"That I can; and now, gentlemen, buy my apples. I have to make me living, ye know."

The soldiers bought a good many apples, and with his store somewhat depleted, Dick went his way, crying in his shrill voice:

"Apples! Apples! Nice, red apples!"

Looking back, Dick saw several of the soldiers assisting the fellow he had knocked down to walk away, he having recovered consciousness.

"I guess that coward has learned a lesson!" thought Dick, grimly.

CHAPTER III.

IN DANGER.

Dick had been to Brooklyn Heights before, and knew the lay of the land perfectly.

He knew where the officers' quarters would be, and he made his way in that direction.

He stopped crying his apples as he approached the building where the officers were quartered.

He wished to slip in on them, if possible.

By doing so, he might learn something of value.

So he kept still, and walked along the hall of the building, opening one door after another softly.

Whenever an orderly came along, Dick would cry his apples, but in a rather subdued tone of voice.

He sold several apples to the different orderlies he encountered.

They, of course, thought that Dick's reason for being so quiet was his disinclination to make a noise within the sacred precincts set apart for the British officers.

This was what Dick wished them to think.

He opened the doors leading into several rooms occupied by officers, but did not hear anything that gave him any information.

He was about to become discouraged.

He realized very clearly that he was taking his life in his hands in coming into this place.

If it was discovered that he was disguised, that he was not

a woman, the suspicions of the British would be aroused at once.

Then, deprived of his disguising bonnet, he would be recognized sure.

He would be made a prisoner.

And to be made a prisoner meant death!

The youth was brave, however.

He did not falter.

His step was firm, his air and actions natural and confident.

Some of the orderlies joked Dick, and one chucked him under the chin.

"Be careful, my friend!" said Dick, in his shrill voice; "be careful; I hev already thrashed one man for being too sassy, an' I kin serve another the same way, if it becomes necessary!"

"That's all right, aunty!" was the laughing rejoinder; "I will be careful. So you are the woman who knocked Larkins out, are you?"

"I thrashed a brute; I don't know what his name is."

"It was Larkins, and served him right. I'm not that kind of a man, aunty."

"And it's a good thing for both of us ye ain't, young man!"

Then Dick made his way along the hall, and opened door after door. There is little doubt that had Dick not been disguised as a woman he would have been thrown out in a jiffy.

Or, worse yet, he might have been arrested as a spy.

His thinking to disguise himself as a woman had been a happy thought.

In any other guise he could not have penetrated into the building which was the headquarters of the British officers at all.

The youth could not help congratulating himself on his foresight.

Presently Dick opened a door along toward the farther end of the hall.

A glance up and down the hall had assured the youth that no orderlies were about just at that moment.

So he took advantage of the opportunity, and opened the door very softly.

What he saw enchaind his attention at once.

He stood in the doorway like a statue.

He scarcely breathed, so fearful was he that he would disturb the proceedings.

In the room were four men.

They were fine-looking men.

They had on the uniforms of British generals.

A glance only was needed to tell Dick that these were the four generals of the British Army.

"Generals Howe, Clinton, Percy and Cornwallis!" thought Dick.

"And they are conferring together, and outlining their plan of campaign! Oh, if I could but hear their conversation in full!"

Dick glanced back into the hall.

No one was in sight.

He looked back into the room again.

The great generals were bending over a table, looking at a map or chart.

It was evidently a chart or map of New York and vicinity.

The attention of the generals was attracted to the map.

They were thinking of nothing else.

They were entirely engrossed; they had no thought of other things.

Of course, they had no thought that a patriot spy could penetrate their very presence.

They would have laughed at the idea, had anyone advanced it.

So they pursued their work in happy unconsciousness that danger threatened.

Of course, physical danger did not threaten them, but danger that some of their plans might become known to a patriot spy.

Dick glanced eagerly about the room.

At one side he saw a door.

Did it open into a closet, or into another room—which?

Dick could not know without investigating.

If it was a closet and he could reach it, and take up a position therein, he might secure some important information.

The generals, thinking themselves alone, and perfectly safe, would discuss their plans freely.

The door in question was at the side of the room to the left from where Dick stood.

To reach the door he would have to walk ten or twelve feet, diagonally, across the corner of the room.

Could he do it without being observed by the generals?

The youth knew that it was a dangerous undertaking.

One or more of the men might look up at any moment.

In that event he would be discovered, and if discovered trying to slip across the room no excuses would avail him.

They would be suspicious, and he would be made a prisoner.

Then, when the bonnet was removed, it would be discovered that he was a boy.

Then—death by bullet or hanging!

Dick thought of all these things.

But it had no effect on him.

He had come into the British stronghold to obtain information that would be of value and benefit to General Washington.

Such information could not be obtained without danger to the person obtaining it.

So Dick made up his mind to take the risks, and try to reach the door.

With the youth to decide was to act.

That was one of Dick's strong points.

There was no vacillation, no indecision about him.

He was quick to decide and prompt to act.

Such qualities are absolutely essential to the successful spy.

Dick gave one more quick glance backward, and up and down the hall.

No one was in sight.

The next instant he left his position in the doorway.

He stole forward on tiptoe, heading for the door at the side of the room.

He kept his eyes on the men at the table.

They were still engrossed in the study of the map.

Dick walked on his tiptoes, and made scarcely more noise than a shadow would have made.

He felt that his life depended on his carefulness, and he was very careful.

Forward he stole!

He was halfway across the room, when one of the men coughed and turned his head.

Luckily for Dick, he turned his head in the other direction.

Dick paused and stood like a statue.

He felt that the man was almost certain to look around in his direction.

The youth gathered himself together to make a dash and try to escape.

He would not be captured if he could help it.

But the man did not turn his face in Dick's direction after all.

Instead, he turned back to a survey of the map or chart.

It was with difficulty that Dick smothered a sigh of relief.

He had expected instant discovery, followed by a flight and fight, perhaps, for life.

But he had escaped discovery.

He might be able to reach the door after all.

He stole forward once more.

He reached the door without having been discovered.

He seized the knob.

Turning it gently, he pulled.

The door came open.

A closet was revealed.

Dick stepped through the doorway as quickly as he could, consistent with noiselessness, and pulled the door shut after him.

Just as the door was closing, one of the generals looked around.

He gave a start.

He imagined he had seen the door moving.

Then he rubbed his eyes.

"I have been studying the map too closely," he thought; "and my eyes jerked and played me false."

Thus did Dick have a very narrow escape, of which fact he was, however, in entire and blissful ignorance.

Dick congratulated himself on his success in gaining the shelter of the closet.

He could now listen to the conversation of the generals without fear of being discovered.

How he hoped they would go over their plans in detail!

If they were to do this, and he could get away, and take the information to General Washington, it would be a great thing.

The commander-in-chief of the Continental Army could then make his arrangements accordingly, and would be able to checkmate the British at every turn.

"Well, what do you think will be our best plan of procedure, General Clinton?" asked one of the men, a few moments after Dick had become ensconced in his hiding place.

Dick guessed that it was General Howe who had spoken.

"Well, I will tell you what I think, general," was the reply; "it is my belief that after we have captured the city of New York—which will not be difficult, as the rebels will evacuate as soon as we start to make an attack—we must then pass up the Hudson past the forts with our ships, and get around to the rear of the rebels and cut off their retreat."

"That is my idea exactly," replied a voice, which was that of General Howe, of course.

"But how can we accomplish that?" asked another voice. "Do you think we can capture Fort Washington?"

"I am confident we can," in Howe's voice; "but it will not be necessary, I think. We can run up past the fort

with our ships and fire on them, while we attack them from both front and rear."

"Yes; that will be a good plan, and, as you say, I think we can put it in execution."

"I am sure of it."

"And when do you think of attempting it?"

"I have not decided as yet. These bushwhacking rebels are so tricky that we will have to be careful."

"True."

Dick smiled to himself.

"You'll think they are tricky before you get through with them!" he thought.

"The first thing to do is to capture New York," went on General Howe; "and I think I shall move on the city the fifteenth."

"The fifteenth!"

Dick made mental note of the date.

To-day was the thirteenth.

Only two more days would elapse before the British would move on New York.

Washington must know this in time!

Dick made up his mind that the commander-in-chief should know it in time!

"While we are on the subject," said a voice not General Howe's, "we might as well decide on the point from which to move in trying to take the rebel army from the rear."

"I think this will be as good a point as any," said Howe.

Evidently he pointed out a place on the map, and Dick hoped the place would be mentioned.

His hopes were gratified.

"Throgg's Neck!" he heard one of the other generals say.

"That is the place," said Howe; "I think it will be the best point at which to land, and we can move across and attack the Continental Army from the rear very quickly."

"Throgg's Neck!"

Dick made mental note of this.

"We'll see whether or not you do all these things, my fine fellows!" he thought; "I shall take the information to General Washington, and he will attend to the matter, and see to it that your well-laid plans miscarry!"

At this instant an orderly entered the room—at least Dick judged it was an orderly.

He said something in a low tone, and General Howe's voice was distinguished as he said angrily:

"An apple woman, you say? And she was in the hall a few minutes ago, and is not now? Where can she be?—and what do you mean by allowing such a person to enter?"

The orderly stammered, and could not make intelligible reply, mumbling out something about thinking it could do no harm, and that perhaps his excellency might have wished some apples.

"Apples! What do I want of apples?" roared Howe. "There's only one apple I want, and that is the Adam's apple of that arch rebel, Washington! But hunt the apple woman up at once!"

"Yes, your excellency," and the orderly hastened from the room.

The generals did not converse during the ensuing ten minutes.

Presumably they were awaiting the report of the orderly sent to find the apple woman.

He returned at the end of ten minutes.

"The apple woman can't be found anywhere!" he reported.

"Can't be found?"

General Howe's voice was a roar.

"N-n-n-no, your excellency; and what is more, no one can be found who saw her leave the building!"

"Then she must be in the building yet. By heavens! but this looks suspicious! Make a thorough search for her at once, and don't stop until you have found her. We want no strange characters roaming through this building at will!"

"Very well, your excellency; we will find her, if we have to search every room and closet in the building!"

Dick had listened to all this with a feeling of consternation.

His sudden and mysterious disappearance had been noted, and search was even now being made for him!

The search would be prosecuted till the object of the search was found.

Then—what?

CHAPTER IV.

RECOGNIZED BY AN OLD ENEMY.

Dick realized very forcibly the unwelcome fact that he was in a tight place.

A dozen orderlies were searching for him.

They would keep the search up till they were successful.

There was no doubt regarding this.

How Dick wished that the generals would vacate the room for a few minutes!

He would quickly improve his opportunity to try to make his escape.

The generals gave no signs of any intention of leaving the room, however.

They would stay and await the report of the orderlies.

"I guess I am in for it this time!" thought Dick.

He would have liked to do something, to make an attempt to escape, but he realized that to do so would only result in instant disaster.

There were four men in the room, and they would be able to overpower him, and prevent his escaping.

So he did the best thing he could do—he remained where he was, and awaited developments.

This was a nerve-trying ordeal.

Dick had nerves of steel, however, and was able to endure it.

Presently footsteps were heard in the hall, and then the door opened and several persons entered.

"Have you found her?" asked General Howe, in irritable accents.

"No, your excellency."

"Have you searched thoroughly?"

"Yes, your excellency; we have searched high and low."

"In all the rooms?"

"Yes, your excellency—in all the rooms excepting this one."

"Well, the woman has not been here; but it is strange what has become of her!"

"So it is!" in the voice of one of the generals.

"Shall we look in the closet yonder, your excellency?" asked an orderly.

Dick's heart came up into his mouth.

The ordeal was at hand.

He felt that he was on the verge of discovery.

What would be the result?

What could he possibly say to account for his presence in the closet?

"Absurd! she could not be in there!" came in General Howe's voice; "she could not have entered this room without our knowing it; however, finish your work. Look in the closet."

"Very well, your excellency."

Footsteps were heard approaching.

The orderly was coming to open the door.

Dick summoned up all his will power.

He steeled his nerves for the ordeal which was now so close at hand.

The next instant the door was jerked open.

Then a gasping cry of amazement and consternation escaped the generals and the orderlies.

They had expected to see the closet empty.

And now to see the very object of their search standing there before their eyes!—it was almost paralyzing.

"The apple woman!" cried the orderly, recoiling.

"Zounds!" from General Howe.

The others all uttered exclamations as soon as they could collect their wits sufficiently to grasp the situation.

"Woman, what are you doing here?" almost shouted General Howe, growing very red in the face.

And now, in the hour of his trial, Dick stood the test admirably.

His quick mind had formulated a plan of action even as he heard the steps of the orderly approaching the door.

As the door came open and the eyes of those within the room fell upon him, Dick simulated great fear, and trembled as if with the palsy.

And now, in answer to General Howe, he said, in a shrill, quavering voice:

"Please, sir, has he g-gone?"

The general and the others present gazed at the supposed woman in amazement.

"Has who gone?" asked the general. "What do you mean, woman?"

"T-the m-man who t-tried t-to k-kiss me!"

Dick had serious doubts whether or not this ruse would be successful, but he had no other that he could attempt, and he hoped that it might succeed.

"Who tried to kiss you?"

"I-I d-don't know, sir; it was a man who looked l-like one of them men," and Dick pointed at one of the orderlies.

The fellow flushed up, and stammered out:

"It wasn't me, your excellency! I never tried to kiss her!"

Had the situation not been so grave, Dick would have been forced to laugh, the poor fellow looked so confused and frightened.

The situation was too serious, however, and he had no trouble in keeping his face straight.

Then General Howe's practical mind recurred to the subject of Dick's presence in the closet without their knowledge.

"How had the apple woman got there?" he asked himself, and he straightway asked Dick this question, accompanying the question with a glare, in which was considerable suspicion.

"Why, I jest walked right in here, sir," replied Dick, with great apparent candor and frankness.

The general looked skeptical.

"You don't mean to say that you walked right into this room, and entered that closet without any effort at concealment?" he asked.

"Yes, sir; that is what I did do, sir."

"Why did we not see or hear you, then?"

"I cannot say, sir; unless it was because you wuz so took up with lookin' at that thing on the table that ye didn't hev eyes nor ears for anythin' else."

General Howe looked at the supposed woman in incredulity.

"I don't see how that could be possible," he said.

Then a sudden suspicion took possession of him.

"Take off your bonnet!" he ordered.

Dick realized that he was now in great danger of discovery.

He made up his mind to keep from taking off the bonnet as long as possible.

"Why should a poor woman like meself take off me bonnet?" he asked. "I want to be goin', if ye will see to it, sir, as how that man don't try to kiss me again."

"Take off your bonnet!" repeated General Howe.

"Won't ye buy some of me apples, an' let me go, sir?"

Dick asked in a tone of entreaty, such as he thought would be used by a woman in his situation.

"Off with that bonnet, I say."

The command was roared this time.

"Oh, all right, sir, if ye insist," said Dick, and he removed the bonnet.

Those in the room looked at Dick with interest.

They noted with surprise that he had short hair, which was out close to the head when the boys received their uniforms.

To General Howe this looked suspicious.

He gazed at Dick keenly.

"You haven't very long hair for a woman," he remarked.

Dick hardly knew how to take this.

He could not tell whether the general was suspicious or not.

He was afraid that he was, however, and he hastened to do what he could to disarm suspicion.

"I had a bad fever, sir, some time ago," he explained; "and me hair all came out. It hasn't had time to grow long again."

"Oh, that is it."

The general's tone betokened that he was in doubt.

It was evident that he was puzzled.

Dick was a handsome, round-faced youth, and looked like a very good-looking woman, but the British officer was suspicious. He could not understand how the woman got into the closet without the knowledge of himself and companions.

Dick fidgeted uneasily.

He wished to be getting out of there.

The atmosphere was too warm and oppressive for him.

"Can I go now, sir?" he asked.

"Not yet," was the reply; "I am not satisfied."

Then he looked at Dick shrewdly, and asked:

"How long have you been in the closet?"

"Only a little while, sir."

"Humph! Did you hear what we were talking about?"

Dick shook his head.

"No, sir; I wuz too scart to listen."

Dick's air and tone were simple, but still the British general was not satisfied.

He was naturally of a suspicious nature.

"I don't know what to think about this," he remarked, reflectively.

"Please let me go, sir," said Dick; "I am a poor, lone woman, and have my living to make. Let me go and sell my apples to your soldiers."

"Why didn't you stay out of doors among the soldiers?"

"I thought, sir, as how mebbly the officers would pay me more than what the soldiers would for me apples."

"There is candor for you!" remarked General Clinton, with a smile.

"Yes, indeed!" from General Howe, with an answering smile.

Just then a captain entered the room.

Dick saw, with dismay, that it was Captain Frink, an officer who had seen him when he was within the British lines a couple of weeks before.

At that time Dick had pretended that he wished to join the British Army and help fight for the king.

He had actually had the nerve to remain in the British camp a day and a night.

He had had an encounter with this Captain Frink, before joining the British Army, and had shot the worthy captain in the cheek.

The captain was a very vain man, and the bullet had left an ugly mark on his face.

Consequently he would bear Dick no good will.

Dick felt that if the captain recognized him, it would be all up with him.

He kept his head turned away as much as possible.

When Captain Frink's eyes fell on Dick he gave a start. He paused and looked at the disguised spy searchingly. There was a puzzled look on his face.

CHAPTER V.

WONDERFUL DARING.

He owed the captain one for happening in and exposing him.

Quick as the lightning's flash, he dealt the captain a terrible blow on the jaw.

The captain gave utterance to a cry of pain and amazement.

Then he dropped to the floor, as limp as a piece of cloth.

Then, following up his advantage, for the spectators were speechless and paralyzed by the temerity of the apple woman, Dick leaped forward toward the orderlies.

He struck out with both fists.

Thud! Thud! the blows sounded as they took effect on the jaws of the orderlies, and down went the men to the floor with still heavier thuds.

General Howe was the first one of the four generals to grasp the situation and attempt to do anything.

He leaped to his feet, drew his sword, and sprang toward the youth.

"Halt!" he cried, authoritatively; "surrender or die!"

For answer Dick threw the basket, which was still half filled with apples, at the general.

The basket struck General Howe in the face.

The apples poured out onto the floor.

In some manner the handle of the basket went over the general's head.

Before he could disengage himself, Dick had leaped through the open doorway.

The youth ran down the hall as fast as he could go.

From the room which he had just left came cries of rage and execration.

The British general was very angry.

The idea of him, a British general, being treated in such fashion!

It was shocking!

So he considered it.

And the blow of the basket in his face had shocked him considerably, without a doubt.

But little did Dick care.

He would have liked to have shocked the general worse. Dick hoped he would be able to get out of the building without encountering any orderlies or soldiers.

Once outside, and perhaps he might escape.

Dick had not traversed more than half the length of the hall before General Howe and Captain Frink were out of the room and into the hall.

"Halt!" roared the stentorian voice of the general; "halt! or, by heavens, I'll fire!"

But Dick was in no mood for halting.

He was determined to escape and carry the important news of which he had become possessed to Washington, if such a thing were possible.

So the youth paid no attention to the order to halt.

He kept right on going.

And he increased his speed, if anything.

Crack!

Dick heard the whir of a bullet.

It whizzed past his ear, not missing the head an inch.

Crack!

Another shot!

This time Dick felt a peculiar burning sensation in his right side.

The bullet had hit him!

The youth wondered if he was badly hurt.

After the momentary burning sensation he felt no inconvenience at all.

"Perhaps I am not injured," he thought. "The bullet merely grazed the skin, likely."

Crack!

The general and the worthy captain were determined to kill the fleeing youth if they could, evidently.

The third bullet missed Dick, as the first had done; but it found lodgment in a human form.

A soldier had just turned the corner of the hall, and the bullet struck him in the shoulder.

He gave utterance to a cry of pain, and staggering backwards fell to the floor.

Dick felt sorry for the poor fellow.

But he could not help the occurrence of the accident.

He leaped over the man's form, and darted around the corner of the hall, where it turned, just as there came another shot.

The bullet whistled past his head.

"Close shaves, all of them!" he thought; "well, just so they miss, is all I care for."

The youth ran along the hall very rapidly, but not so rapidly as he could have run had he not been hampered by the skirts.

But the dress had served its purpose, and was now only an impediment.

He had no time to stop and get rid of the handicap, however.

He must keep on running.

The youth reached the outer door just as the general and the captain made the turn in the hall.

Each of the officers had fired two shots, and both were angry and disappointed at not having brought down their man.

Each being possessed of but two weapons, they could only pursue the daring fugitive, and yell for him to stop.

But if bullets had failed to stop Dick, it was not likely that yells, threats and commands would have any effect.

Nor did they.

Dick paid no attention to the shouts from the rear.

He was bent on escaping to the outer air.

He felt certain, however, that his situation would become, if anything, more desperate.

As soon as he emerged from the building, he would be in the midst of hundreds of British soldiers.

To fight them would, of course, be an impossibility.

To attempt it would be absurd.

But the youth was not disposed to despair.

His brain was working quite as actively as were his feet.

Dick remembered that there was a half-basement to the building.

He had noticed that underneath the stoop were steps leading down to the basement.

He believed that the best thing he could do would be to enter the basement, and try to get out and away through the rear window.

As he leaped out upon the front stoop, he gave a quick glance around.

Everywhere were soldiers.

It would be impossible to make his way through that great crowd and escape.

His exit from the building attracted the attention of the soldiers at once.

The spectacle of a woman coming flying out of the entrance to the building at such speed, and then down the top steps four at a time, was enough to attract their attention.

They stared in open-mouthed astonishment.

Dick paid no attention to them.

On reaching the ground, he turned short to the right, and descended down the basement steps.

He seized the door-knob and gave it a twist.

Then he pushed against the door.

It opened.

"Thank goodness for that," he thought, as he leaped through into the basement; "I was afraid the door would be locked."

As he disappeared through the doorway, the general and captain appeared on the stoop above.

"Where is he? Where did he go?" both cried, excitedly.

"Where did who go, general?" asked a sergeant, who stood near.

"Sam Sly, the patriot boy spy!" cried Captain Frink. "He came out of this building just now!"

"We saw a woman come out, but no——"

"That was him!—that was Sam Sly!" cried the captain, almost dancing up and down in his excitement; "he is dressed in women's clothing. Which way did he go?"

Exclamations of astonishment escaped the soldiers who were near enough to hear what was said.

"The apple woman a spy!"

"That beats the world!"

"The boldest thing I ever heard of!"

"She—he went down into the basement, general!" cried the sergeant. "Come; we will quickly capture her—him!"

The sergeant leaped down the steps, followed by the general and captain and a dozen soldiers.

He seized the door-knob, turned it, and pushed.

The door refused to open.

She—he has barred the door, general!" he exclaimed.

"Get a battering ram of some kind and break the door down!" the general ordered.

The sergeant hastened to do as he was ordered.

But it took time to find something that would do for a battering ram, and meantime Dick was not idle.

His first act, on leaping through the doorway, was to close the door and bar it.

He had not looked to see what sort of a place he was in.

His first thought was to keep the soldiers out.

When he turned around, he stood face to face with a British soldier.

The soldier was evidently astonished at seeing a woman down in the basement.

The fact of the matter was that there was liquor in the basement, and the soldier had been surreptitiously filling a flask when Dick's sudden appearance startled him, and interrupted him in his praiseworthy work.

"Who are you, and what does this mean?" he stammered, looking at the youth inquiringly.

"It means trouble for you!" said Dick, fiercely, for he was desperate.

Then he seized the astonished and frightened soldier by the throat.

There was a brief struggle.

The soldier, of course, offered all the resistance he could.

Then, too, he was taken by surprise, and Dick had secured his deadly throat hold.

Few persons were stronger in the fingers than the boy spy.

He had a grip of iron.

In this instance he wasted no time.

He was in a great hurry.

If he escaped, he would have to work rapidly.

He put all his strength into the clasp of the fingers.

The result was that the soldier sank to the floor unconscious very quickly.

Dick listened a moment.

He heard the sounds of excited talking and hurrying feet outside the door.

"If I had time, I would like to exchange clothing with this fellow," thought Dick; "but I haven't the time. I must escape from this place at once, or it is all up with me!"

He looked about him.

There were several windows at the sides of the basement, and about even with his head, but when Dick went to them, and looked out, he saw scores of British soldiers just outside.

"There is no such thing as getting out there in safety," he murmured.

Then he hastened to the farther end of the basement.

His attention was attracted to some boards, which looked as if they hid an exit from the basement.

Dick was desperate.

Like the drowning man, he clutched at a straw.

Might not escape lie beyond the boards?

He would see!

Seizing hold of one of the boards, each of which was a foot wide, at least, Dick, exerting all his wonderful strength, tore the board loose.

An exclamation escaped him.

Another basement lay beyond.

"It is the basement of the building adjoining the one in which the officers have their headquarters," the youth thought. "It may not be watched, and that case I may be able to escape from it."

He crawled through the opening he had made.

He found himself in just such a basement as the one he had left.

He hastened to a window and looked out.

He saw scores of British soldiers, but their attention seemed attracted toward the other basement.

They seemed not to think that the fugitive might be able to get through into the adjoining basement.

Doubtless they did not know that the two were connected in any way.

Dick selected a window as far away as possible from where the soldiers were gathered, looking toward the basement.

The window was in the end, while the soldiers were at the side.

Dick found an old box, which he placed underneath the window.

Mounting to the top of the box, he tried the window.

It was hinged at the top, and swung upward and inward.

Dick quickly opened it, and fastened it up by means of a string which was fastened to it.

He stuck his head cautiously out, and looked about him.

There were no soldiers near.

Doubtless the excitement had attracted them to the side of the building.

The youth did not hesitate.

He knew that it would be a matter of but a few minutes before the soldiers would be in the basement.

If he remained he would be quickly captured.

Knowing this, he acted promptly.

He climbed through the window.

Leaping to his feet, he looked around.

He saw no one.

He walked quickly to the corner of the house—an old frame building.

He peered around the corner.

Not more than twenty yards distant were scores of soldiers.

They were not looking in his direction, however.

At this instant Dick heard a yell of surprise and rage.

"They have broken into the basement and discovered that I am not there!" he thought. "I must make a break for liberty!"

He glanced about him with critical eyes.

The earthworks, at the nearest point to the youth, were at least sixty yards distant.

He would have to run that distance across an open space.

If seen—and it was almost an absolute certainty that he would be—he would be fired upon.

It was a great risk.

But he must take it, or submit to capture at once.

Dick did not intend to tamely submit to capture.

er making such a brave attempt at escape, he was
But going to give up now.

, gathering all his strength together for the ordeal, he
suddenly darted out from behind the house, and ran with
all his might toward the earthworks.

He had gone about ten steps when he was seen by some
of the soldiers.

"There he goes!" they cried, and then:

Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack! went the firearms,
and Dick heard the whiz of bullets on every side!

CHAPTER VI.

THE ESCAPE.

The youth did not stop, however.

Instead he simply gritted his teeth, and ran the faster—
that was possible.

Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack! went the weapons of
the soldiers.

The bullets flew thick about the daring youth.

It seemed as if a special Providence watched over the
y spy.

Although several of the bullets went through his cloth-
ing, and one or two grazed his skin, he was not wounded.

Dick reached the earthworks.

He leaped up on top of the earth-wall with a bound.

Then he leaped down upon the other side, just as another
ley was fired.

Again the bullets whistled all around him; but none
uck him.

Half way down the slope several horses were standing.

They were tied to trees.

Bridles and saddles were on them.

They had either been recently ridden into the camp, or
y had been placed there for the use of some of the
liers in leaving.

Perhaps they were for the use of messengers who rode
ward and forward from General Howe, at Brooklyn
ghts, to Admiral Howe, his brother, who was on board
flagship, in York Bay, off the southwest shore of Long
nd.

did not matter to Dick why the horses were there, how-

they were there, and that was all he cared for.

He raced down the slope at breakneck speed.

He knew that he would have no time to spare.

The soldiers would be after him.

The bullets would soon be whizzing about his head
again.

He was as determined to escape as ever.

Indeed, the prospects were better than they had been a
few minutes before.

If he could reach the horses, mount one and get away be-
fore he was killed or seriously wounded by a British bullet,
he would give the king's minions a merry chase of it.

If they caught him, they would have to work to do it.

Dick raced down the slope, straight toward the horses.

They lifted their heads and snorted with fright as he
approached.

But the youth was used to horses.

He spoke a few reassuring words to the animals as he
neared them.

Selecting one which, to his experienced eyes, looked cap-
able of showing good speed and endurance, Dick made
straight for it.

He seized the halter-strap, and began untying it.

His nervous haste made this more difficult than it would
have been under ordinary circumstances.

He soon succeeded in untying the strap, however, and as
he leaped into the saddle, the soldiers, who had reached the
top of the earthworks, fired a volley.

Dick heard the bullets whistle, but his good fortune was
still with him, and he was not hit.

The horse was, however.

It gave vent to a snort of surprise and anger, and leaped
away down the slope.

Dick seized the reins, and turning his face toward the
soldiers on the Heights, he waved his hand and gave vent to
a triumphant yell.

"Catch me, if you can!" he cried.

The soldiers fired another volley.

Then, seeing that it had done no harm, they came run-
ning down the slope, to where the horses were tied.

As many men as there were horses mounted, and came
racing down the slope in pursuit of the flying fugitive.

Dick had a good start, however.

Moreover, he had a good horse.

The youth was confident that he had the best horse of
the lot.

He remembered, however, that the horse had been hit
by a bullet, and it might be that, if the wound was at all
severe, the horse would become weak from loss of blood, and
the soldiers would be enabled to overtake him.

So he took particular note of the gait of his horse.

He could not see but what the animal was running as strongly as could be expected.

After a few minutes he decided that the wound had been a mere scratch, and that it would not hurt the horse at all.

Then he looked back to see where his pursuers were.

They were about a quarter of a mile behind, and coming as fast as they could make their horses travel.

They were kicking the poor animals in the sides and belaboring them with the end of the reins.

"That's all right; kick and pound all the wind out of your horses!" said Dick, grimly; "that will be all the better for me!"

The boy was a good horseman, and knew how to get the speed out of his mount, and at the same time not needlessly exhaust the animal.

He urged the horse onward, gently.

"If I can hold my own, and keep this distance ahead of those fellows for the first three or four miles," he thought, "I will be able to escape, as their horses will be played out by that time, while mine will still be comparatively fresh."

Dick soon reached the Jamaica road, and striking into it, rode toward the interior of Long Island as fast as the horse could go.

"I am going directly away from the patriot army," he thought; "but I have no choice. The first thing to do is to get away from those fellows back there; then I can begin figuring on how to get back to general Washington with the information which I have gained."

The youth kept looking back, and soon decided that he was holding his own in the race.

If anything, he was slowly but surely pulling away from his pursuers.

This was quite satisfactory.

Dick began to feel good.

He even enjoyed the wild ride which he was indulging in.

Then, too, the thought that he had ventured into the lion's den, had bearded the tiger in his lair, and had escaped, was exhilarating, to say the least.

Dick was a youth who liked adventure.

Action, the livelier the better, was what he enjoyed.

And he had had plenty of it within the past hour or so.

He was still having it.

Onward galloped the horse, and behind Dick came the British soldiers.

It must have become apparent to the pursuers, after the

race had been on for a few minutes, that it was going a difficult matter to catch the fugitive.

They kept up the chase, however.

Perhaps they thought that the youth's horse might lame, or give out, in which event they would soon have the rider in their power.

Onward raced pursued and pursuers.

Dick gradually drew away from the soldiers.

Their horses became tired first, and then began to lag.

The soldiers beat and kicked the poor brutes, but could not urge them to fresh exertions.

Dick's horse, on the other hand, was comparatively fresh.

Here and there, along the road, Dick met an occasional farmer, and no doubt the sight of a woman—apparently riding a horse at breakneck speed, and, moreover, riding man-fashion, surprised the staid farmers not a little.

Others, still, at work in the fields, paused in their work to stare at the youth in open-mouthed amazement.

The country was for the most part level, but there were occasional hills and clumps of timber.

Dick began to figure on giving his pursuers the slip.

He made up his mind to do so, if possible.

He decided to wait till he reached another hill. Then he would, as soon as he was down on the farther side of the hill, turn to the left, make a circuit, and head back toward Brooklyn Heights—taking care to give them a wide berth, however.

Presently he saw a hill ahead of him.

When he reached the top, Dick paused and looked back.

He gave a start.

Then he shaded his eyes and looked again.

"They have stopped!" he exclaimed; "they have given up the chase! Good! But I'll make sure of it."

The youth waved his hand in the air, and then urged his horse down the side of the hill.

He went but a short distance.

Stopping, he leaped to the ground.

Patting the tired animal on the neck, the youth spoke a kindly word, and then walked back up almost to the brow of the hill.

Just before reaching the top he dropped upon his hands and knees, and crawled the rest of the way, Indian fashion.

When he reached the brow of the hill, he stretched himself out at full length and looked back to see what the soldiers were doing.

They were still sitting on their horses, and were doubtless talking the matter over.

Presently, as Dick watched, the little body of horsemen began moving.

But Dick watched closely, and then an exclamation of satisfaction escaped him.

"They are going in the other direction," he said; "good! they have given up the chase, and I am free to go where I like."

Dick lay there, and watched the horsemen grow smaller and smaller, until at last they reached the summit of a hill, a mile or more away, and disappeared from sight.

And still he kept his place.

He feared treachery.

Dick thought that it might be a trick to throw him off his guard.

They might intend to retire beyond the brow of the hill a short distance, and then renew the pursuit.

He remained in his recumbent position for nearly half an hour, and then he got up and returned to where his horse was grazing at the side of the road.

"I guess they have given it up, after all," the youth decided. "Well, I am glad of it! And now, to get rid of this woman toggery."

Dick quickly divested himself of the dress, and as soon as he was rid of the female apparel he felt one hundred per cent. better.

"I am myself once more!" the youth murmured, in a tone of satisfaction. "I feel as if I could whip the entire British Army!"

Dick rolled the dress up in a bundle and tossed it among some weeds at the side of the road.

"Now to get back to the commander-in-chief with the information I have gained!" Dick murmured.

Dick mounted the horse and rode away down the road.

He rode slowly, as there was no need of haste.

His mind was on the problem of how to get back to the patriot army on Harlem Heights.

He must get back as quickly as possible, as the British were to move on New York within two days.

"One thing is certain," the youth said to himself; "I shall have to wait till dark to go back. If I were to try to go back now I would be captured sure. I must find a safe hiding place, and lie low till after nightfall."

The youth rode onward a couple of miles at a slow gait, and presently came to a farmhouse.

"I believe I will stop here, and see if they will let me stay till to-night," he thought; "I am getting hungry, anyway, and must have something to eat."

Dick rode up in front of the house, there being no fence in front, and called out "Hello!" in a loud voice.

A pretty, buxom girl of about seventeen or eighteen years came to the door.

Dick bowed, and said:

"Good morning, miss. Would there be any chance to get my dinner here?"

Dick could not tip his hat, for the good reason that he had none on. He had started out with a bonnet, it will be remembered, and had lost that, so he was bare-headed.

"Oh, yes, sir," the girl replied, smiling sweetly; "we shall be glad to serve you with dinner, sir."

Dick saw her look at his bare head, and he hastened to say that the wind had blown his hat away.

Then he leaped down, led his tired horse around to the barnyard, placed him in the stable, fed him, and returned to the house.

CHAPTER VII.

A BONE OF CONTENTION.

Dinner was ready when Dick returned to the house.

He learned, then, that the man of the house, a Mr. Holborn, was away.

This suited Dick very well, as he had no desire to see a man.

The chances were that the people of this household were in sympathy with the king.

Most of the Long Island families were.

Dick found the members of the family very pleasant people.

There were the mother and three daughters, the eldest, Jessie, being the one who had talked to Dick.

She was about eighteen years old; the other two were about fourteen and ten years, respectively.

It did not take the youth long to learn which way their sympathies leaned.

They were strong loyalists.

They questioned Dick, and he told them he was a king's man.

He felt that it was not wrong to tell a story under such circumstances.

It was necessary that he remain somewhere under cover during the rest of the day; he had made up his mind to remain here, and if they knew he was a patriot, or "rebel," as they termed the patriots, they would refuse to give him shelter.

Dick told them that he was a scout, looking about, getting the lay of the land, etc., and also getting recruits for the British Army from among the loyalists of the island.

This established him firmly in their esteem.

Anyone who was loyal to the king, and especially anyone who was helping the cause of King George, was welcome to their house.

Dick found them very good company, and Jessie, especially, seemed to find Dick good company.

He was one whom most girls would fancy.

And it was evident that Jessie had taken a liking to the young stranger.

Dick was no flirt, by any means.

His was an intensely serious nature.

Yet at the same time it was not possible that he could dislike being made the object of admiration by the pretty girl.

So they talked and laughed, and got along splendidly.

When Dick broached the subject about staying there the rest of the day, the mother and daughter urged him to do so.

They would be pleased to have him, they said.

Dick gave as an excuse for staying that he had already ridden a whole night and half a day with scarcely any rest at all, and his horse was almost tired out.

The looks of the horse proved this, as a natural result of the severe race which he had been forced to run, in carrying Dick away from the British soldiers.

Dick and Jessie got along swimmingly.

They had a melodeon in the best room, and Jessie played and sang, and then Dick sang, after which both sang together, "God Save the King," and a number of other familiar songs of the day.

Both had good voices, and made good music, and the other members of the family enjoyed the impromptu concert immensely.

"If they knew I was a patriot spy, they would treat me differently," thought Dick, smiling in his sleeve. "Well, all is fair in war."

About the middle of the afternoon Mr. Holborn came home.

He was introduced to Dick, who had given his name as Robert Saunders.

Mr. Holborn regarded Dick with some degree of suspicion, the youth thought.

"He is not so gullible as his wife and daughters," thought Dick; "I shall have to be careful."

The man asked too many questions to suit the youth, and to get out of having to be catechised, Dick pleaded sleepiness, and asked if he might lie down and snatch a few hours' sleep.

"Of course he might," the good woman of the house

said, and Dick was shown upstairs to the "spare room," told to make himself at home.

Dick thanked her, and said that he would do so.

The youth lay down upon the bed, and although he had no thought that he really was sleepy, he had not lain there ten minutes before he dropped off into a sound slumber.

The youth was right in his thought that Mr. Holborn was suspicious of him.

When his wife came back downstairs, the man of the house said:

"Molly, I don't believe that young fellow is what he pretends to be!"

The woman looked surprised.

"You don't?" she exclaimed.

"No."

"What makes you think it, Gus?"

"I don't know; something seems to tell me he is a wolf in sheep's clothing. I don't believe he is a king's man at all."

"I do, papa," said Jessie; "he said he was."

"Oh, of course, you would believe anything any handsome young man would tell you!" said Jessie's father, whereat the girl blushed and looked somewhat disconcerted.

"Don't be hard on Jessie, Gus," said the woman; "I think like she does, that the youth is honest, and a king's man."

"He's awfully nice," said Bessie, aged ten.

"I'm like pa," said Susan, the fourteen-year-old; "I believe he is a rebel, pretending to be a loyal king's man."

"I wouldn't be as suspicious as you are for anything, Gus!" said Mrs. Holborn. "I am sure the young man is just what he says he is. His face is honest, if I ever saw a face that was."

"But these are war times, wife, and people do tricky things in time of war, and think nothing of it."

"Yes; but what would there be to gain by coming to our house and claiming to be a king's man when he wasn't?"

"Nothing, so far as I can see; but you can't tell anything about it."

"Of course not; so let's not think unjustly of the young man. It will be better to wait till we have something against him."

Mr. Holborn had nothing more to say at that time, but it was plain that he was as suspicious of Dick as ever.

So was Susan; but Mrs. Holborn, Jessie and Bessie were firm in their belief that Dick was what he claimed to be—a loyal king's man.

And all oblivious of the fact that he was a bone of contention in this little household, Dick slumbered on.

It was about six o'clock when Mr. Holborn entered the house, coming from the barn, where he had been to feed the stock, and announced to his wife that a company of British soldiers were coming down the road from the west.

"I guess it is Captain Frink and his company," the man said in conclusion.

And such proved to be the fact.

Captain Frink was, it may as well be stated, a frequent caller at the Holborn home.

He was smitten with the pretty face of Jessie, the buxom eldest daughter.

"I am glad to see you, captain," said Mr. Holborn, bowing.

"Ah! I'm pleased to hear you say so, Mr. Holborn," said the captain. "Is it anything special?"

"Yes, indeed! There is at this moment a young man in my house whom I suspect of being a patriot, though he pretends to be a loyal king's man."

Captain Frink gave a quick start.

"A young man, you say?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Describe his appearance."

Mr. Holborn did so, as nearly as he could.

Frink's eyes shone with delight.

"It is that young patriot spy, Sam Sly; I am sure of it!" he exclaimed.

Then he told Mr. Holborn the story of the youth's daring feat, in venturing into the headquarters of the British generals that morning, and making his escape.

The Tory farmer became greatly excited.

"It is the same young man, I am sure!" he cried.

"And you say he is in the house now?" asked the captain.

"Yes; he is upstairs asleep."

"Good! Then we will soon have the young rascal in our power!"

"Will you go up and take a look at him now, captain?"

"Yes; at once—but where is Miss Jessie; I will first meet her, with your permission," and then the gallant captain took Jessie's hand and kissed it, causing the young lady to blush with pleasure.

The fact was that Miss Jessie was something of a coquette.

"Now we will go and take a look at the young man," said the captain.

Captain Frink says he thinks the young man asleep up-

stairs is Sam Sly, a rebel spy," explained Mr. Holborn, and Jessie's pretty eyes expressed their owner's amazement.

"Goodness! Do you really think so, captain?" she asked.

"I do, Miss Jessie; judging from your father's description of him he is the rebel spy in question."

"And he is such a pleasant, handsome young man!"

The captain's face flushed with jealousy. He did not like to hear the girl say anyone else but himself was handsome.

"Oh, he's a smooth young rascal!" the captain growled; "it will be a good thing for the British cause when he is captured and shot. He is the most fearless, daring spy in the rebel army."

"He doesn't look dangerous," said Jessie.

"Come with me, captain," said Mr. Holborn; "I will lead you to the room where the youth is sleeping."

One of the soldiers spoke to the captain at this moment.

"Yonder comes another company, captain," he said; "and," he added, in a low tone, "I believe it is Captain Parks' company."

The men in Frink's company well knew the captain's penchant for falling in love with pretty girls, and they knew, also, that Captain Parks was in love with Jessie Holborn, and that there was bad blood between the two captains as a consequence of their rivalry for the smiles of the maiden.

Of course, the men sympathized with their captain, and it was the same way with the men of Parks' company, and there had been a number of encounters between the different members of the companies.

A muttered curse escaped the lips of Captain Frink.

"Why did he have to show up here at this particular time?" he muttered, pettishly. "Well, I got here first, and I am going to stay, and he has got to move on! There is not room here for both of us; and then, too, the honor of capturing the spy, Sam Sly, shall be mine!"

"Good for you, captain!" the soldier said; "we'll stand back of you."

Mr. Holborn looked somewhat disconcerted, while Jessie's pretty face took on a frightened look.

Never before had both her suitors appeared at the farmhouse at the same time.

Consequently she had been enabled to enjoy the society of both officers, and the coquettish instinct which she possessed had led her to keep this up.

Now, however, her course in this matter bade fair to bear bitter fruit.

The girl, scenting the coming storm in the air, discreetly withdrew into the house.

Presently Captain Parks and his company of soldiers drew up in front of the farmhouse.

Captain Parks leaped to the ground and shook hands with Mr. Holborn.

Then he turned and faced Captain Frink.

"So this is the way you search for rebel spies, is it, Captain Frink?" he remarked, sarcastically.

"This is the way I search for them, Captain Parks," was the angry reply; "and it is the way I find them, too. The spy, Sam Sly, is in the house here, and I demand that you return at once to headquarters. To myself shall belong the honor of having effected his capture."

Captain Parks laughed contemptuously.

"You 'demand?' " he remarked, sarcastically.

"Yes."

"Well, that is all the good it will do you. I think you are simply trying to bluff me into leaving you a clear field with Miss Jessie, and I refuse! I have as much right here as yourself, and I purpose staying."

"I got here first."

"And I last. He who laughs last laughs best, you know, and I think that he who comes last will fare best, also. I am determined to put the matter to the test, anyway, and I shall stay until told that my company is not desired."

"Common sense and common courtesy ought to dictate that you withdraw."

"I am sorry to say that I don't agree with you, my dear captain."

Captain Frink was very angry.

At the same time, he knew that Captain Parks was a dangerous man, and he hesitated to provoke a quarrel.

His men were there looking on, however, and it would not do to allow himself to be backed down by his hated rival, so he said, fiercely:

"I tell you, you will have to withdraw! I was here first, and I am going to stay! Sam Sly, the rebel spy, must be my prisoner!"

"Oh, you can have him," said the captain, carelessly; "it is Miss Jessie I am after; and while you are capturing the spy, I will go in and have a little talk with Jessie."

Frink's face grew black with rage.

"You'll do nothing of the kind!" he snarled.

"I won't?"

Captain Parks was as serene as a May morning.

"You will not!"

"And why not?"

"Because I say you shall not!"

A dangerous light appeared in the eyes of Captain Parks. "Are you Miss Jessie's guardian or keeper?" he asked coldly.

"No; but you shall not talk to her until after I have had a talk with her!"

"Oh, I shall not, eh?"

Captain Parks' tone was cold and hard.

"You shall not! I was here first, and I have first right to talk to her!"

"But, my dear captain, you came here to capture the spy, Sam Sly, you remember, and you have no time to spare to attend to love making! Business first, you know, is the rule of the soldier."

"No matter; I will have the first talk with Miss Jessie. You will have to move on!"

"My dear captain, I will move on when I get ready!" was the cool rejoinder; "and I hope you will pardon me when I say that no one-horse snide of a captain, like yourself, will make me move on, or keep me from talking with Miss Jessie at any time I please."

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen! Please do not quarrel!" cried Mr. Holborn.

But the two captains paid no attention to him.

They were angry, and were bound to come together in an encounter sooner or later, anyway, and the present time was as good a one as any.

The soldiers of the two companies looked on with calm faces.

They seemed ready to enjoy the spectacle of an encounter between their respective commanders.

"What is that?" cried Captain Frink, in a rage; "do you dare to apply an epithet to me? By heavens! I will not brook such insolence! I challenge you to——"

"There goes that spy!" cried the Tory farmer at this juncture. "He will escape! Quick! if you wish to capture him!"

He pointed to the stable, from the doorway of which Dick Slater was at that instant leading his horse!

CHAPTER VIII.

A BOLD DASH.

Dick had slept soundly for several hours.

He was suddenly awakened by the sound of loud voices.

It was warm weather, of course, and the window of the room was open.

The sound of voices came from outside the house. Dick leaped up, and went to the window. He looked down into the yard, and beheld a sight that would have been sufficient to give a person with weak nerves a terrible shock.

Two companies of British soldiers were down there. They were the companies of the captains Frink and Parks.

The two captains were, as the reader knows, quarreling. Dick realized this instantly.

"They are both in love with pretty Jessie Holborn!" he thought; "and I should judge that there is going to be trouble. Well, it is lucky for me, for otherwise they would have captured me!"

Dick must escape from the house immediately.

But how was he to do it?

The room he was in was a sort of L-room, and at the opposite side was another window.

Dick hastened across to the window.

He found it closed, but it yielded to a push, and came up easily.

It was about fourteen feet from the window ledge to the ground. This was a pretty fair leap, but Dick did not hesitate an instant.

He clambered through the window, seated himself on the sill, and then leaped to the ground.

He was given a severe jolt, but was not injured.

Now to get to the stable and get my horse out," thought Dick. "Once on his back, and headed away, and I can bid defiance to the redcoats. Their horses have come a long distance, and are tired, while mine is fresh."

Dick stole away from the house, keeping it between himself and the soldiers,

there was not much danger of anyone from within the house seeing him, as their attention would naturally be attracted to the two men who were engaged in the controversy. Dick ran swiftly, and when he was a quarter of a mile from the house, he began to describe a semicircle, so as to approach the stable from the rear.

He would thus have the stable between himself and the soldiers, the same as he had had the house between himself and them.

The youth succeeded in doing as he had figured on doing.

He reached the stable without having been seen.

It is doubtful if he would have been seen had he walked directly from the house to the stable, so interested were the soldiers in the controversy between the two captains. They had no eyes for anything else.

Dick entered the stable from the rear.

He climbed through an opening.

"If I could get the horse out through that opening, I would be all right," he thought.

But he could not do this.

He would be forced to lead the horse out through the door, which was in front, on the side next the house.

Then he led the horse to the doorway.

Dick looked out.

The two captains were still engaged in the war of words.

The attention of all seemed centered on the two.

Dick thought that he might succeed in getting out and away unobserved.

He must try, anyway.

He stepped softly out through the doorway, and pulled the horse along by the bit.

He got out without being seen, but just as he was in the act of mounting, Mr. Holborn happened to look that way.

"He saw Dick, and, as we have seen, gave the alarm.

"Now for it!" thought Dick.

He leaped into the saddle, and with a wave of the hand and a yell of defiance, he urged the horse into a gallop.

Back of the stable, and stretching away for half a mile, was a meadow.

It was not separated from the barnyard by a fence.

Dick headed the horse across this meadow and away from the redcoats.

It was his only course.

He could not hope to pass the redcoats and reach the road.

He would be riddled with bullets before he could pass the soldiers.

As it was he had a close call.

The soldiers fired a volley, and a bullet cut through his hair, grazing his scalp.

The next instant he had placed the stable between himself and the redcoats, and for the time being was safe.

He knew he would be pursued, however, and he urged his faithful horse to its best speed.

"You are fresh, old fellow, and can show those scoundrels a clean pair of heels!" said Dick.

By mutual consent, the two captains, Frink and Parks, postponed their quarrel.

They leaped into their saddles.

"Fire on the scoundrel!" cried Frink; "fire, I say!"

It was then that the volley was fired, one of the bullets of which cut through Dick's hair.

"After him!" cried Parks; "we must not let the spy escape this time."

The redcoats were determined to catch and capture Dick, if such a thing were possible.

Therefore they lashed their tired horses to their best speed.

The animals responded nobly.

They did their best, but they were already tired, while Dick's horse was fresh, and the fugitive pulled steadily away from them in spite of all they could do.

In desperation, the redcoats fired another volley.

It was from pistols, however, and most of the shots fell short.

What did not fall short went wild.

It would have been by the merest accident had the youth been hit.

Dick reached the farther side of the meadow presently, and was forced to come to a stop long enough to throw two or three rails to the ground.

Then he forced his horse to leap over, after which he sprang into the saddle and was away again.

He was in the road once more, and he felt comparatively safe.

"They can't catch me," he thought.

One thing that would make his escape the more certain and easy was the fact that it would soon be dark.

Once darkness had settled over all, he could laugh at the attempts of the redcoats to catch him.

Dick was not very familiar with the lay of the land on Long Island.

He knew the general direction he should go, however, and he was headed in that direction now.

The redcoats kept up the chase with desperate energy.

They had gained some on him when he stopped to tear down the fence.

This had given them hope that they might overtake the boy spy.

The hope must have soon begun to die out, however, as Dick began drawing away from them.

He was soon as far ahead as he had been prior to losing the considerable lead at the fence.

His horse was going as strong as ever, while the horses of the redcoats were beginning to falter.

"I am all right!" the youth said to himself; "that is, providing I don't encounter a force of British unexpectedly."

The youth drew away from his pursuers quite rapidly.

Soon they were half a mile behind.

He kept on increasing his lead, and when darkness set-

tled down over all, he was a mile ahead of the redcoats at least.

The youth felt secure now.

"All I will have to do will be to keep right on going the direction in which I am now headed, and sooner or later I will come out in the vicinity of Brooklyn Heights. Of course, I will have to be careful not to be picked up by any of the British outposts."

Dick leaned forward and patted the neck of the horse.

He had taken a great liking to the magnificent charger.

Twice in one day the animal had saved him from capture by the British.

And capture would have meant death.

So the horse had twice saved him from death in one day.

It was not strange that an affection for the noble beast should spring up in Dick's breast.

"How I wish I could keep him!" the youth murmured.

"There is no doubt but that in a great deal of my work I will need a good horse, and that this is a good one. I have ample evidence to-day."

Dick did not know it, but the horse he bestrode, which had served him so well, was the special property of General Howe. The animal was a fine one, with Arab blood in his veins, and was a valuable animal indeed.

Dick rode onward through the night.

He let the horse pick his own way, as the animal could see better than he could.

So long as they kept going in a westerly direction, they were all right, Dick knew, and must sooner or later come out somewhere near Brooklyn Heights.

The youth rode onward for three or four hours.

He followed the main road, and at last he came in sight of the lights in the British headquarters on the Heights.

Guided by these lights, Dick having found that they were no longer encompassed by a fence, made a detour, and went around the Heights.

He was very careful to move slowly, and even then he was challenged once.

He made no answer, and hastened to ride away from the vicinity, and at last he reached the East River at a point nearly half a mile above the point where the regular ferry was.

"Now, then," murmured Dick, looking longingly across toward the lights on the New York side; "how am I to get across there with my horse?"

He sat and studied for some time, but could think of no scheme.

"I wish the ferry was running!" he thought.

But it was not running, and the problem of how to get across the river was a difficult one to solve.

At the point where Dick sat on the horse there was a light, the reflection from the lights on the Heights. Suddenly he heard a voice say: "There is someone on a horse! Maybe it is the spy! Forward, men!"

Then came the patter of running feet.

Suddenly a desperate resolve took possession of Dick.

He was determined not to submit to capture now, after having risked his life a dozen times during the day.

Better death trying to escape than capture and then an ominous death, he reasoned.

"I'll do it!" he murmured, setting his teeth; "I'll try and whether I succeed or not, I'll cheat the redcoats of their expected prey!"

Then Dick patted his horse affectionately on the neck, urged him down the embankment and into the water. The bold and desperate youth was going to try to swim his horse across the East River!

CHAPTER IX.

A REMARKABLE SWIMMING FEAT.

At the point where Dick entered the East River it was a mile wide.

The youth did not know whether he would reach the shore or not.

He knew horses were fairly good swimmers.

He had never heard of a horse swimming a mile. There was a chance that the animal he bestrode could get across, however.

Dick took the chance.

The redcoats saw what the youth had done, and set up

as soon as they reached the river bank, they fired

bullets whizzed all around the youth.

He was not hit, although several bullets came very

A lucky star was still in the ascendant.

He had been fired upon at least a hundred times that day, but one ball only had touched him, and that merely on his side, causing a burning sensation, but inflicting no injury.

The noble horse had been wounded in the flank very severely, however, and not enough to hurt him.

Again the redcoats fired a volley, but the horse was swimming strongly, and had got well out in the stream, and the bullets went wide.

Dick felt that he was safe, so far as the British were concerned.

The last volley had demonstrated that fact.

So he now turned his whole attention to the work before him—that of getting safely across the river.

He patted the horse on the neck, and spoke encouragingly to him.

The noble animal, his head held high in the air, responded with a whinny.

It was as much as to say: "I'll do my best to get across the river."

The horse was a splendid swimmer.

But Dick speedily realized that it was going to be a hard task for the animal to swim a mile and carry him on its back.

The youth was himself a good swimmer.

He made up his mind to not make the horse do all the work.

He would do his share.

Dropping the bridle-reins over the pommel of the saddle, Dick quietly and quickly slipped out of the saddle and into the water.

As the horse moved onward, Dick reached out and caught hold of the animal's tail.

The horse whinnied again, as if to inform its young master that it understood and appreciated his efforts to make its work easier.

"All right, old fellow," said Dick; "go ahead, and take it easy. We'll get across all right, and get even with the British and Tories!"

Onward they moved.

Dick was swimming, and was scarcely any drag on the horse at all.

He knew the animal would have all he could do to reach the other shore, anyway.

When they were about half way across, Dick noticed that the horse was moving slower.

The noble brute was beginning to get tired.

Dick spoke to the animal encouragingly.

"Keep on, old fellow," he said, just as though the horse could understand him; "you're all right."

The horse whinnied in reply.

There is no doubt at all that the animal was encouraged by the youth's words.

Of course it could not understand what Dick said, but it

is without doubt true that it knew what its young master meant. It knew he meant to encourage it.

The youth's tone told it that.

Animals know more than a great many people give them credit for knowing.

The domestic animals are very intelligent, and the horse is, perhaps, the most intelligent of all animals.

And this particular horse was more intelligent than the majority of horses.

Dick noticed that the animal swam stronger after he had spoken.

So every little while he spoke encouragingly to the horse, and it kept up its steady progress toward the other side.

They were two-thirds of the way across, presently.

A few minutes more, and they were three-fourths of the way across.

Nearer and nearer they drew to the New York shore.

Not more than two hundred yards remained when the horse began to falter and struggle.

The long swim had almost exhausted him.

"Have courage, old fellow," cried Dick, cheerily; "it is only a little ways farther. Keep it up yet a little while!"

The horse whinnied, but in a rather weak manner.

It was plain that the poor brute was almost exhausted.

Dick's heart sank as he thought that perhaps, after all, the horse might not be able to swim to the shore.

The youth was not afraid for himself.

He was confident that he could swim the rest of the distance.

But he could not bear the thought of losing the noble animal that had served him so well.

The youth left his position at the rear, and swam to the horse's head.

He took hold of the animal's mane, and patted him on the neck.

"Good boy!—brave boy!" he said; "you'll make it, all right!" Keep it up, old fellow! Don't give up!"

The horse was almost exhausted, and swam in a jerky, struggling fashion that was painful to witness.

Dick kept on encouraging the animal with kind words, and by patting it on the neck, and at last they reached the shore.

The horse drew an almost human-like sigh of relief as it felt its feet touch bottom.

It gave vent to a low whinny of delight.

"We're all right, now, old fellow!" cried Dick, joyfully; "we are safe, and have fooled the redcoats nicely!"

Dick led the horse up out of the water.

Both were very tired, and the youth decided to rest

a few minutes before starting for headquarters, seven or eight miles up on Harlem Heights.

"We have earned a few minutes' rest, old fellow," Dick, and the horse, if it could have talked, would probably have acquiesced in this view of the case.

Dick sat there and rested for perhaps ten minutes.

Then he got up, mounted his horse, and rode away toward the headquarters.

The horse seemed almost as fresh as ever, and was willing to go at a good speed.

Manhattan Island was not one great city then, like now.

Only the lower point of the island was occupied by the city.

The upper half of the island was made up of country homesteads and the mansions or granges of the wealthy people.

As Dick was riding along one of the lanes, he was challenged.

"Halt! Who comes there?" cried a voice, which seemed familiar to Dick.

Dick was surprised.

He had not expected to be challenged.

He considered that he was among friends, however, and came to a stop promptly.

"Who comes there?"

The question was repeated in a louder tone.

"A friend!" Dick replied.

"Advance, friend, and let us see what you look like," came the command, and Dick rode slowly forward.

He had gone but a short distance when he suddenly found himself surrounded by a dozen or more youths, with muskets, as he could see in the faint light of the moon, which was now up.

"Why, it's Bob!" exclaimed Dick; "I thought I recognized your voice, old man!"

"Dick!" cried Bob Estabrook; "great guns, old man, and it is you, back again, alive and well? We hardly expected to ever see you again."

The youths surrounding Dick were members of his company of Liberty Boys.

They greeted their young captain with delight.

"Where did you get the horse?" asked Bob, eagerly; "he is a fine one, isn't he?"

"He is, for a fact, Bob," said Dick; "he has saved my life more than once to-day."

"Phew! Tell us about it, Dick."

"I will; but first, tell me what you boys are doing here."

"We are on picket duty."

"Oh!"

"At our own request," grinned Bob. "We got tired of lying in camp, and asked to be allowed to come down here to do picket duty."

"I see."

"I suppose they thought it would give us practice." "Likely," and then Dick told the youths the story of adventures during the day.

They uttered exclamations galore.

"Say, you've had a lively time of it, haven't you?" exclaimed Bob, when Dick had finished.

"Lively is no name for it!"

"Say, I wish I had been with you!"

"Maybe the general will let you go with me the next time I go on an expedition of that kind."

"I hope he will; ask him, won't you, Dick?"

"Yes; I'll ask him."

"Good for you!"

Dick now bade the boys good-night, and rode on.

He was anxious to reach headquarters before the commander-in-chief went to bed, if he could.

He knew the general stayed up late; sometimes till after midnight.

He thought that he would be able to get there in time to make his report that night, without having to disturb the commander-in-chief after he had retired.

Half an hour later he arrived at the headquarters.

He turned his horse over to an orderly, and inquired if the commander-in-chief was still up.

He was informed that the general had not yet retired.

"Show me to him at once," said Dick; "I have important news for him."

Dick was conducted straight to the commander-in-chief's room.

Dick was well known around headquarters.

They knew he was a trusted and successful spy.

Therefore there was no delay in reaching the presence of the commander-in-chief.

The general was delighted to see Dick.

He shook the youth by the hand, and inquired with some eagerness if he had been able to learn anything of interest.

Dick modestly said that he had, and then he went ahead briefly and tersely told the general the story of the adventures, and imparted to him the information of the enemy's intentions, which he had gained at such a risk. It was hard to say whether the commander-in-chief was moved with wonder and admiration of the youth's

exploits or pleased with the information. He congratulated the youth again and again on his wonderful work.

"You are too bold, however, my boy," he said, seriously; "you cannot hope to always escape scot free, as you have done to-day. Another time you may be killed or captured. I shall have to caution you to be more careful, and not take such great risks."

"I didn't think I was taking such great risks, sir," said Dick, simply; "I wished to gain some information that would be of value to you and of aid to the Cause of Freedom, that is all."

"You did nobly; but I cannot afford to lose you, Dick. You are too valuable a man, and you must bear this in mind."

"I'll try to, sir; but I'm afraid that in my eagerness to get the information I shall forget all about it."

A smile wrinkled the corners of the commander-in-chief's mouth.

"Youth is life," he said, as if to himself; "well, take as good care of yourself as you can, my boy."

"I shall always do that, sir. I am not going to let a Briton or Tory get the better of me if I can help it!"

"I am sure of that," with a smile; "well, the information which you have brought is of great value, and although we cannot hold New York, we will see to it that General Howe's army does not get around to our rear, as he is figuring on doing. I will keep my eye on Throgg's Neck."

CHAPTER X.

A BRIEF VISIT WITH LOVED ONES.

Dick left the headquarters of the commander-in-chief feeling well satisfied.

He had performed the work set him to do in a creditable manner.

He had earned and received the praise of the great general, Washington.

Therefore there was good reason for his feeling satisfied with himself and all the world.

Dick was not so very sleepy, but not knowing but he might be called upon to go upon another dangerous errand at any moment, he decided to lie down and get some rest, if not sleep.

He went to his quarters and, lying down, was soon asleep.

Next day General Washington made arrangements to make the British as much trouble as possible when they

should move upon New York, which it was expected they would do on the 15th, as this was what Dick had heard them say they would do.

The commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, after due deliberation, decided where the British would, in his estimation, make the landing, and he stationed a couple of brigades of soldiers near the place.

Dick asked that his company of Liberty Boys be stationed there, and his request was acceded to.

General Washington was willing to do anything he could to accommodate the boy spy, whom he was beginning to think a great deal of.

And, more, he was beginning to depend on the youth to furnish him with advance information of the movements of the British.

The youth's record, so far, had been better than that of any other spy in the patriot army.

Sure enough, the British moved on New York, as they had said they would do in Dick's hearing at the British headquarters two days before.

Whether or not the British generals thought Dick had not been able to return to the patriot army will never be known. It may be that they knew they could capture the city easily, anyway, even though the patriot army had advance information regarding their intentions.

Anyway, they moved on New York as had been decided.

Ships from Admiral Howe's fleet ascended the Hudson River as far as Bloomingdale—about opposite what is now Central Park—and up the East River as far as Blackwell's Island, and these ships opened fire on the northern part of Manhattan Island, while the troops embarked from Brooklyn in boats, and headed across toward Kipp's Bay—what is now the foot of East Thirty-fourth street.

The two brigades of patriot soldiers were stationed near where the British evidently intended landing.

In the front ranks was Dick's company of "Liberty Boys."

They were eager for the battle to begin.

The battle in which they had been engaged a couple of weeks before—the battle of Long Island—had whetted the appetites of the Liberty Boys for more.

They were eager for the fray.

At last the British troops were across.

They began landing the troops.

The patriot soldiers were some distance away, up the slope.

They waited for the British to advance.

The British were in no hurry.

Then they advanced in a body.

"Wait till they are within fifty yards of us," instructed the commander in charge; "and then fire when I say the word."

The patriot soldiers waited.

In the brigade were a lot of new recruits, men who had never been in battle.

As the great body of British advanced, with bugles sounding and drums beating, these raw recruits became frightened.

The men trembled like leaves.

It was their first experience, and they were, perhaps, nervous.

Certainly, the British looked dangerous.

The new recruits became more and more frightened.

When the British were within one hundred yards, several companies turned and fled.

They had been seized with sudden panic.

The majority of soldiers feel thus when entering a first battle.

The same soldiers who are frightened so badly they will run, if they get the chance, may later on make the boast of brave soldiers.

The sight of the fleeing soldiers was bad for the morale of the men.

It set them a bad example.

But for the prompt action of Dick Slater and his company of "Liberty Boys," it is likely that the entire force of patriot soldiers would have taken fright and fled.

At the supreme moment Dick leaped to his feet, and cried:

"Follow me, Liberty Boys! Charge the cowardly British coats! Forward! and fire as you run!"

With a ringing cheer, the "Liberty Boys" followed their intrepid leaders—for Bob was beside Dick—and they rushed down the slope toward the oncoming British like a hurricane.

They fired as they ran, and uttered cheer after cheer.

Their action stayed the panic—nipped it in the bud—it were—and the entire division of patriot soldiers suddenly lost all sense of fear, and charged down the slope after the "Liberty Boys," cheering at a great rate.

The British did not know what to make of this.

They paused and wavered.

It was evident that the action of the patriot soldiers, coming so unexpectedly, had confused them.

They did not know what to think or do.

Was the entire patriot army coming to attack them?

Either this, or those coming toward them were insane.

The British could hardly credit the thought that the entire patriot division had, to a man, gone crazy.

Then there must be some ulterior motive in making this sudden fierce charge.

This thought and the uncertainty of it all disconcerted the British to such an extent that they did not think to turn the fire of the approaching human hurricane.

Before they could gather their scattered wits, the hurricane was upon them.

It is often the case that boldness will win.

In this case, it looked like foolhardiness.

Just the same, it won.

At any rate, the British were given more rough treatment in a shorter length of time than it had been their bad fortune to receive at any prior time during the war.

The patriots, headed by the cheering "Liberty Boys," flung themselves upon and then into the British lines with the force of a cyclone.

In an instant, seemingly, the patriots and British were mixed up in what looked to be an inextricable mass.

But the advantage was with the patriots—temporarily, at least.

They shot and bayoneted the redcoats with a fierce energy that would not be denied, and caused a panic to seize upon the British.

They, in their turn, turned and fled.

And after them, for a hundred yards or so, went the shots.

When it dawned upon the patriots that they were chasing five times as large as their own.

This was a dangerous thing to do.

The British were to suddenly regain their nerve, and upon them, the patriots would be slaughtered like sheep.

Dick, who was in the extreme front rank, suddenly stopped, and waved his followers back.

"Stop!" he said; "we are now the victors, but if we push them further they are liable to turn on us, and serve us worse than we have served them. Back, everybody, to your former position!"

The soldiers obeyed the youth's command, and quickly made a retreat, taking up their position where they had been before.

The British had been given a severe setback.

A hundred or more of their men had been killed.

They were wild with rage.

Too late, they realized that they had been fooled.

They had been made the victims of a lot of daring youths, who had imbued the other soldiers with the same daring, temporarily.

The redcoats panted for an opportunity to get revenge.

Having gathered themselves together, and got straightened out, they again began to advance.

"We will have to look out for them this time," said Dick; "they are mad now."

"You may be sure they are," agreed Bob.

The British advanced rapidly, and when they were near enough, the patriot soldiers greeted them with a volley, which had the effect of checking their advance somewhat.

The British were now "mad," sure enough, and they began firing on the patriot soldiers.

The fire became rapid on both sides, and for half an hour the redcoats were held in check.

Then they again advanced, and the patriots were forced to fall back, as it would be madness to try to stand their ground in the face of such overwhelming numbers.

The patriots were falling back gradually, and the engagement continued for several miles.

The purpose of the patriots in holding the British forces back was to give General Putnam's army, consisting of four thousand men, time to escape from the city proper, up along the Bloomingdale road, and to the patriot army's stronghold on Harlem Heights.

Dick, Bob and their brave "Liberty Boys" got a sufficiency of fighting during this moving fight.

Several of the "Liberty Boys" were killed, but the rest had the satisfaction of knowing that for each one five times as many redcoats had bitten the dust.

The moving fight was kept up until the bluffs along what was called Harlem Creek—a small stream emptying into the Harlem river—were reached.

This division of the patriot army had retreated along the line of what was called the Post road, while Putnam's division was coming up the Bloomingdale road.

When they reached the top of the bluffs, the officer in command looked eagerly to see if he could discern Putnam's division coming.

"I see them!" he exclaimed, eagerly. "If we can hold these heights half an hour, Putnam's division will be here, and we will have done all that could be expected of us. Do you think we can hold it that long?" this last to Dick, who stood near.

"Of course we can!" said Dick; "we 'Liberty Boys' will stick here till Putnam's division reaches us, or die! I took an oath, when my father was murdered by a Tory, that I would settle with the British and Tories in full before the war was ended, and my 'Liberty Boys' took an oath to stand by me, and if you say stick here, we will stick, and it will

give us just that much more opportunity to settle with the British."

"Well, I say 'stick.' We must hold the British back till Putnam's division gets here."

The order was made general, and the patriot soldiers paused and stood their ground.

The skirmish was lively from this time on, as the patriot troops loaded and fired as rapidly as they could.

It was hot work.

Men fell on both sides, but they fought on.

"Stand firm, and keep fighting!" cried the commanding officer, during each lull, and the men did so.

Putnam's division came closer and closer, and at last it joined the division fighting so bravely there, on the bluffs.

Then the retreat was begun once more.

With the addition of Putnam's troops, it became comparatively easy to hold the British back.

The British followed till they came within a quarter of a mile of Harlem Heights, then realizing that they could not hope to storm the patriot army's works, they fell back.

"Phew! that was warm work!" said Bob Estabrook, when the "Liberty Boys" had got to their quarters, after reaching the Heights.

"It was pretty lively, sure enough!" agreed Dick. "Some of our brave boys fell, though, Bob," he added, a sad look on his handsome face.

"Yes; but we must expect that, Dick. We can't all go through the war and escape with our lives. Some of us are bound to be killed."

"True; but it is sad to think that we will never see the brave fellows alive again, or hear them laugh and talk."

"So it is, Dick."

All the members of the company were sad, but with the coming of another day and another battle, their sorrow would be laid aside, as there would be no time to think of such things.

On the next day, the sixteenth, the British attacked the patriot army, and tried to carry the Heights by assault.

They had reckoned without their host, however.

They found that it was another case of Bunker Hill—only this time the patriots had plenty of ammunition.

The British were repulsed, and lost about three hundred men.

The American loss was seventy.

The British presently withdrew, feeling, evidently, that they could not carry the Heights by storm, and the attack was over.

Dick Slater, Bob Estabrook and the "Liberty Boys" fought bravely, and had attracted the attention of General Washington, who was an eye witness of the battle.

He afterward complimented Dick and the company "Liberty Boys" publicly, which made the youths feel proud.

As one said, when they were talking the matter that evening in their quarters:

"I believe we could whip the entire British Army, no other reason than the purpose of getting praise from General Washington!"

The British kept their place in front of the Heights but made no move toward attacking; and a week passed with absolute inactivity on both sides.

The soldiers began to grow restless.

They longed for something to break the monotony.

They would rather fight than lie idle.

Especially was this the case when they were so far from the city, and did not dare to go down into it.

Dick and Bob were very restless, and when the week passed, and the British showed no signs of getting ready for attack, Dick went to General Washington and asked for a couple of days' leave of absence for Bob and himself.

"We wish to go to our homes near Tarrytown, and spend a couple of days with our folks," he explained, and the commander-in-chief gladly granted the youths leave of absence.

Dick had his splendid charger that he had captured from the British, and Bob secured a horse from one of the Tories, and they rode away, and headed for home, as boys could be.

It was about seventeen miles to the homes of the youths, but they made the distance in about two hours.

They had good horses, and believed in getting the most out of them.

The homes of the two boys were only about a quarter of a mile apart, and each went to his own home.

They were anxious to see their own home folks, and to attend to their love making—for the youths were in love with each other's sister—later on, with a clear conscience.

Mrs. Slater clasped her boy to her heart and wept for his tears.

Her husband had been murdered, shot down in front of her house before her eyes, by Tories, and when Dick had gone away to join the army it had torn her heartstrings for she feared he might be killed in battle, and this would leave her and Edith to fight life's battles alone.

"My darling boy!" she murmured.

"My beloved mother!" the youth breathed, tenderly, and he kissed her again and again.

"Aren't you going to kiss me, Dick?" asked Edith, blushing.

"Oh, I will do so, if you wish," laughed Dick; "you know very well, however, that Bob will attend to that, as soon as he has said 'how d'ye do?' to the folks, and can get over here!"

"I've a good mind to slap your ears, Dick!" said Edith, blushing. "I guess you want to save all your kisses for Alice!"

"Oh, no, Edie, dear; I give Alice a different brand of kiss, you know! It's sweeter, and has more flavor to it!"

Edith gave the youth a little slap at this, and then he gave her a brotherly hug and kiss.

"That'll get you into practice for Bob!" he grinned.

"Yes; and you for Alice!"

It was hard for Dick to get ahead of his sister.

Dick and Bob managed to stay a couple of hours with their own home folks, talking of their adventures since entering the patriot army, and then they each went over to the home of the other, meeting on the way.

"Hello, Dick; where are you going?" asked Bob, with a wink and a grin.

"Oh, up the road a ways," with an answering smile; "where are you bound for?"

"Oh, down the road a ways."

The two passed on, but Bob turned when he was twenty paces away, and called out:

"You'll find her under the old apple-tree, old man."

Dick did not ask who "her" was. He knew.

As Bob had said, sweet, pretty Alice Estabrook was seated on the rustic bench under the old apple tree where Dick and Bob had passed many a happy hour, and when she appeared she leaped into his outstretched arms with a quivering cry of delight.

"Oh, Dick, I'm so glad to see you again, alive and well!" she exclaimed.

"And I am glad to see you again, alive and well, and looking just as beautiful and sweet as ever!" murmured Dick, and then he pressed the sweet girl to his heart and kissed her again and again.

When they sat down on the rustic seat, and talked for an hour, the time seeming scarcely longer than a few minutes.

"Oh, Dick, we have heard all about your wonderful exploits while acting as spy among the British," said Alice; "I am afraid you will get killed, Dick! I wish you wouldn't take such risks!"

"I am not afraid, Alice; I have not even been wounded as yet."

"That may be; but you are liable to be wounded or killed at any time. Oh, I shall be glad when the war is over!"

"It will never end until after the British have been whipped, and agree to let the American people have their liberty!" declared Dick.

"Well, I hope that will be soon, Dick!"

"So do I, Alice!"

Presently they went to the house, and Dick was greeted pleasantly by Alice's parents, Mr. Estabrook, though loyal to the king, giving Dick a hearty greeting. Mrs. Estabrook was a patriot, which was how Bob came to be in the patriot army, he thinking as his mother did. Alice, of course, thought as Dick did.

Dick and Bob enjoyed the two days they spent at home immensely; and when they started on the return to the army on Harlem Heights they felt that they could fight all the better for having been enabled to spend even so short a period of time with their loved ones.

There were stirring times ahead for the "Liberty Boys!"

THE END.

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